

# Best Practices When Setting Up and Using Offline Folders

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If you've never worked offline before, following is an overview of the process. (For more information on steps 1 and 3, see Microsoft Outlook® Help for the topics listed after these steps.)

1. Create an offline folder (.ost) file on your computer, specify the information to download and make available offline, synchronize the offline folders with the Exchange folders, and set up Outlook to start offline. (Help topic: Set up offline folders)
2. Start Outlook offline. You do this by starting Outlook, and then when prompted to connect or work offline, choose **Work Offline**. (If you have multiple profiles, Outlook prompts you to choose one before prompting you to connect.)
3. Synchronize the .ost file with the Exchange server. (Help topic: Synchronize offline folders)

After Outlook finishes synchronizing and disconnects from the server, you can continue working with the items in the .ost file.

To achieve the best offline performance, use the settings and synchronization techniques recommended in the following procedures. If a procedure requires changing your existing offline settings, you'll need to be online to do that.